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ALLSTON BRIGHTON

Road to the Right Track fitness, health program for Allston-Brighton youth to mark first year

Posted by Matt Rocheleau February 10, 2014 12:19 PM

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(Boston Police)

Youths participate in the Oaktoberfest 5k.

By Matt Rocheleau, Boston.com Staff

A program that aims to get Allston-Brighton youths active, eating right and making a good life choices has found success in its first year in part due to its simplicity, according to Boston Police officers who founded the initiative a year ago next month.

It's not all-encompassing, and it's not three or four times a week, said District 14 Officer Frank Hughes. It's low-commitment. We don't push them. No pressure. No stress.

The Road to the Right Track program has about 50 youths ages 10 to 18 meet at a local track for about an hour once a week on Saturday afternoons to walk, run and work out.

It's not about times, said Hughes. Anybody can run, Anybody can walk. They're all doing great.

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The program also invites the youths to a monthly meeting where they get a meal — salad, water and whole-wheat pizza — and listen to guest speakers who talk about topics including, nutrition, proper health and exercise, education and good life choices.

Last month, Boston’s new police Commissioner William Evans was the guest speaker.

The program, which will celebrate its anniversary next month, recently hired a nutritionist and has numerous sponsors including the Oak Square YMCA, St. Elizabeth’s Medical Center, Allston Brighton Substance Abuse Task Force, Stone Hearth Pizza and the Boston Police Athletic League.

The New Balance Foundation donates free sneakers and uniforms for the youth. The youths also get water bottles and fitness journals to encourage them to work out on their own and to keep track of what they do.

The Boston Police Department has funded the group’s participation in three local charitable run or walk road races.

And, local schools, including Boston College, Boston University and Harvard University donate time on their tracks for the program’s weekly workouts.

—“We want to get the kids familiar with the universities,” said Sergeant Michael O’Hara. —“All these resources are right in their neighborhoods and they should take advantage of them.”

E-mail Matt Rocheleau at matthew.rocheleau@globe.com.

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(Boston Police)

Boston Police Commissioner William Evans speaks during the program’s monthly meeting in January.



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